



United States Air Force Museum

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NEWS RELEASE

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PRESIDENTIAL AIRCRAFT TO ARRIVE AT U S AIR FORCE MUSEUM

(Dayton, Ohio) The most historic presidential aircraft, No. 26000, is scheduled to arrive at the United States Air Force Museum on Wednesday, May 20, 1998. Arrival of the aircraft is weather dependent.

The aircraft will be flown by members of the Military Airlift Command's 89th Military Airlift Wing, Andrews Air Force Base, Maryland to the Air Force Museum and will land on the runway behind the Museum. It will be put on public display in mid to late June, after defueling and interior preparations, which will allow visitors to walk through the plane. The aircraft will join eight other presidential aircraft in the Museum's Presidential Aircraft Hangar, including President Harry Truman's VC-118 "Independence," President Dwight D. Eisenhower's VC-121 "Columbine III," and President Franklin D. Roosevelt's C-54 "Sacred Cow," all of which visitors can walk through to see the interiors looking much the same as they did during presidential service.

Efforts are underway by the Air Force Museum to recover interior items used in the aircraft. The Museum hopes to be able to locate enough items to reflect the design during the time of President Kennedy's term of office. Exterior markings of 26000 will also reflect the Kennedy era. The aircraft will be taken temporarily off display in the fall, at which time it will be painted by the Museum's restoration crew in the colors initially approved by President Kennedy.

This Boeing 707 (Air Force designation C-137C) was used as the primary presidential aircraft from 1962 to 1973 at which time it became the alternate or backup presidential aircraft. Impressively colored, it featured markings of a national character rather than military. President Kennedy expressed his desire that the exterior decor be designed to reflect this spirit. In March 1961, he approved the distinctive combination of two shades of blue with white for the fuselage of this newest jet transport. And to emphasize the national character of the aircraft, he directed that the words, "UNITED STATES OF AMERICA," appear prominently on the fuselage and the United States flag be painted on the vertical

stabilizer. Following its delivery, large decals of the Presidential Seal were applied to both sides of the nose.

The first official mission for the aircraft occurred on October 12, 1962 when it picked up the Crown Prince of Libya and brought him and his official party to the U.S. for a state visit.

President Kennedy made his first flight in the aircraft when he attended the funeral of Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt at Hyde Park, New York. Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson was sworn in as president of the United States aboard this aircraft at Love Field, Dallas, Texas, following the assassination of President Kennedy on November 22, 1963. President Johnson was aboard as Air Force One flew Kennedy's remains back to Washington, D.C.

President Richard M. Nixon used aircraft 26000 extensively during the first four years of his administration. His most widely heralded trips included the around-the-world trip in July 1969, a visit to the People's Republic of China in February 1972, and his trip to the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics in May 1972.

On October 19, 1981, aircraft 26000 transported former Presidents Nixon, Ford and Carter to Cairo, Egypt to represent the United States at the funeral of Anwar Sadat, president of Egypt. In March 1983, Queen Elizabeth flew aboard the aircraft during her trip to the United States as she visited the West Coast.

The Air Force Museum is located on Springfield Pike, six miles northeast of downtown Dayton. It is open seven days a week from 9 am to 5 pm. Admission and parking are FREE. For more information, call the Public Affairs Office at (937) 255-4704, ext 330 or visit our on-line internet web site at: <http://www.wpafb.af.mil/museum/>

NOTE TO MEDIA: For more information, please contact the U.S. Air Force Museum Public Affairs Division at (937) 255-4704, ext 331, 332, or 330.